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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: DPA LEADERS ON DIALOGUE, KOSOVO STATUS,  
FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

REF: A. SKOPJE 102

[1](#)B. SKOPJE 106

[1](#)C. SKOPJE 22

Classified By: P/E CHIEF SHUBLER, REASONS 1.4(B) & (D).

#### SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) In a February 9 meeting with leaders of eAlbanian governing coalition member DPA, the Ambassador pressed for a revitalized government-opposition dialogue, warned DPA against attempts to destroy eAlbanian opposition party DUI, and asked for full support for the Kosovo status process. She warned that Macedonia risks undermining its NATO membership prospects if it does not speed up implementation of the Framework Agreement (FWA), and advised DPA to let the government enforce rule of law in accordance with applicable procedures in countering criminals and potential Islamic radicals in Macedonia.

[1](#)2. (C) DPA leaders Xhaferi and Thaci accused DUI of exploiting for partisan advantage international community concerns regarding dialogue, denied they are trying to destroy DUI, and expressed full support for the Kosovo status process. They agreed there had been a slowdown in FWA implementation and pointed to plans for hiring more eAlbanians for public administration jobs as proof that DPA is committed to full implementation. Thaci proposed a forceful (but undefined) approach to flushing out criminals in Skopje who allegedly are taking refuge among Islamic hard-liners there. We believe Thaci, who is firmly in the DPA driver's seat, will deliver on some of his commitments to us (a few FWA implementation steps, support for Kosovo status process), while diligently pursuing the systematic dismantling of DUI. End summary.

#### MEETING WITH DPA LEADERS

[1](#)3. (SBU) The Ambassador met with Arben Xhaferi and Menduh Thaci, president and vice president respectively of the eAlbanian governing coalition partner DPA, on February 9 to discuss ongoing efforts to revive government-opposition dialogue and the need to reverse the slowdown in Framework Agreement implementation. She also addressed the need to support UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's Kosovo status proposal and to discourage eAlbanians in Macedonia from joining

Kosovar Albanian protests in Kosovo at this sensitive time.

#### POLITICAL DIALOGUE, EARLY ELECTIONS?

¶4. (C) Xhaferi argued that opposition eAlbanian party DUI was trying to exploit international community (IC) concerns about a lack of political dialogue in Macedonia in order to pressure the government to engage in talks outside of established institutions (ref A). By delaying progress on reforms, DUI was trying to portray the government as incapable of ruling. If the situation continued, Xhaferi warned, the government would have to consider calling for early elections.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador reiterated that political dialogue is intended to make it possible for parliament to function practically, and in terms of FWA requirements. It was not intended to create a parallel system, but would instead provide an impetus for action within the constitutional system. She told Xhaferi that Macedonia's politicians needed to behave like politicians, engaging in trade-offs that would advance Macedonia's EU and NATO membership agenda. All parties had to be involved in such a process, but no party could claim a veto right over it. She added that the IC perceived DPA's goal as being the destruction of DUI, which was not acceptable. The country was fumbling its chances for NATO membership by engaging in brinkmanship with the opposition.

¶6. (C) The Ambassador noted that there was profound concern among NATO members about the current political situation in the country. Early elections were not the solution. They would only take time and further delay reforms. There would be strong international concerns about the fairness of elections conducted under such negative circumstances. Thaci

said there was no plan for immediate early elections, but that the government had considered calling them for July or September "to pressure the smaller parties in our governing coalition." The leading coalition partner, VMRO-DPMNE, anticipated that smaller coalition parties would lose seats in the event of early elections. Those seats likely would shift to VMRO-DPMNE, strengthening that party's hand. The threat of such an outcome, Thaci implied, would silence criticism and independent ideas within the GOM.

#### DESTROYING DUI -- COUNTERPRODUCTIVE

¶7. (C) Thaci denied that DPA intend to eliminate DUI, arguing that it would be counter-productive to do so. He asserted bitterly that, even when DPA found evidence of DUI's past (alleged) complicity in corruption activities, the party was forced to retreat by IC counter-reaction, especially from the EU Special Representative's (EUSR) office. In the end, "we will not offer DUI anything because nothing we offer DUI will be accepted, and they will continue to try to create a continual sense of crisis."

#### KOSOVO STATUS PROCESS -- SUPPORT IT, REFRAIN FROM PROVOCATIONS

¶8. (SBU) The Ambassador noted the GOM's support for Ahtisaari's Kosovo status proposal (ref B) and urged Xhaferi and Thaci to ensure full DPA support for the status process. She also asked that they ensure DPA supporters did not participate in or otherwise support anti-UNMIK demonstrations in Kosovo. Xhaferi agreed, noting DPA's support for the Ahtisaari proposal and its opposition to radical measures by Kosovar Albanians. (Note: Local press reports indicate that at least one DUI member participated in the February 10 demonstration in Pristina. We do not know of any DPA participation. End Note.)

#### PREVENT SLOWDOWN IN FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

¶9. (SBU) The Ambassador urged that DPA work within the coalition to reverse the current slowdown in implementing the 2001 Framework Agreement (FWA), especially in the area of equitable representation. Xhaferi agreed, saying that the

FWA was "at risk of becoming non-implementable" in the current environment. The party, he asserted without providing any details, was working to overcome that.

¶10. (C) Thaci conceded that the GOM's implementation of the FWA was sluggish. He openly admitted that the government's much-touted "tripling of the budget for equitable representation" was "a trick." The government had rolled over, from 2006, jobs to be filled by ethnic minorities, and had combined them with the 2007 target to inflate overall numbers. Nevertheless, the governing coalition wanted to take concrete steps to boost eAlbanian representation in public administration jobs. DPA wanted to employ 70 eAlbanians in the UBK (Interior Ministry counter-intelligence), but the EU had objected that DPA was only trying to create jobs for party activists.

#### COUNTERING POTENTIAL ISLAMIC RADICALS AND COMBATING CRIMINALS

¶11. (C) Thaci asked for USG support in its "war against Islamic fundamentalists and criminals, including racketeers and the occupiers of the Arabati Baba Tekke in Tetovo." NOTE: The Arabati Baba Tekke is the traditional compound used as a headquarters for Macedonia's moderate Bektashi sect. Several years ago, a group of Sunni radicals occupied the main buildings of the Tekke. Since then, the Bektashi have been prevented by the radicals from freely worshipping at the Tekke. END NOTE.

¶12. (C) Arguing for a "soft approach" to ridding the Tekke of its Sunni interlopers, Thaci said he would work with the Bektashi leader and the reis (head) of the Islamic Community of Macedonia (ICM) to persuade, with police action if necessary, the occupiers to leave. Thaci melodramatically said the successful resolution of the long-standing Tekke dispute would set the stage for the "battle in the Skopje mosques," in which racketeers, drug dealers, and "leftover police structures" would be flushed out and arrested.

¶13. (C) The Ambassador noted that the government/government, not individuals or political parties, is responsible for enforcing rule of law, in accordance with established police procedures. She asked Thaci why he was planning to undertake such action, and why now? Was it simply a show of force in the center of Tetovo to intimidate DUI? Thaci replied that there was no attempt to target DUI, but that Islamic radicals were receiving both external and internal funding and were organizing -- now was the time to take action against them.

#### CRIME BOSS KRASNIQI

¶14. (C) The Ambassador asked Thaci whether DPA had any plans for dealing with the festering problem of local Kondovo crime boss Agim Krasniqi, who had been convicted on criminal charges but had not yet been arrested to serve time for that conviction (ref C). Thaci replied that Krasniqi would appear in a Skopje court soon to face separate, reduced charges of "endangering public safety" rather than terrorism charges stemming from a second case against him. If convicted, he would receive a suspended sentence. Krasniqi would in the meantime lose his right to serve as an MP in parliament (he is still on DPA's list of candidates from the July 2006 parliamentary elections).

#### COMMENT

¶15. (C) As evidenced by his dominant role in this meeting, Thaci clearly is in the driver's seat in DPA, Xhaferi having ceded that spot as his physical health has deteriorated. A calculating, operational and practical politician with no ideological foundation or beliefs, Thaci feels under pressure to demonstrate DPA's relevance on the political stage. He believes DUI has managed to squeeze tactical advantage out of its stubborn opposition role (ref A). As a result, Thaci has adjusted his rhetoric to match what he believes are our expectations. He hopes that US "support" will strengthen his hand as he seeks to offset DUI's perceived gains. Knowing Thaci's mode of operation, we expect he will deliver on some

of his commitments (support for the Kosovo status process,  
finding ways to demonstrate some FWA implementation advances,  
keeping Krasniqi out of parliament) while pursuing the  
systematic dismantling of DUI.

MILOVANOVIC